

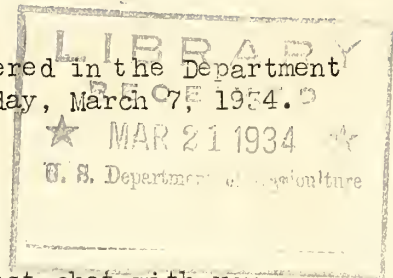
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FEBRUARY WEATHER

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, March 7, 1934.



How do you do folks.

There has been much interesting weather since our last chat with you a month ago. Today we shall first consider the weather of February and then for the winter as a whole. Our reports for February show very unusual conditions. The month was colder than normal in all sections east of the Mississippi River, being the coldest February ever known in the States from Virginia northward and northeastward, with the previous lowest temperatures of record broken at many places. In this area, that is in the northeastern States, a cold wave moved down from eastern Canada near the close of January, and abnormally cold weather was almost continuous thereafter until a definite turn to warmer set in about the first of March.

In the West and Northwest the weather was just as remarkably warm as the Northeast was cold, until near the close of the month, when a cold wave overspread these sections. However, the preceding three weeks of spring-like conditions made the average temperatures for the month much above normal over the entire western half of the Country. In the Northwestern Plains the monthly mean temperatures for February were from 10° to 17° above normal, in contrast to similar subnormal values in the northeastern States.

It is believed we can give you a mental picture of what happened in February by a simple illustration: Let us think for a moment of the climate of the United States as a great wooden disk entirely covering the Country and pivoted near St. Louis, Mo. Now if a giant's hand should revolve this weather disk in a counter clock-wise direction, the Atlantic States would be displaced, of course, northward, and the western and northwestern States southward. This in effect is just what happened to the weather. For example we here in Washington had temperatures normal to Albany, N. Y.; you folks in Philadelphia spent the month climatically in Eastport, Maine, while our New York City friends enjoyed normal February temperature for Burlington, Vt. Now what about the West? Well in this case eastern Montana, for example, was pushed southward climatically to central Missouri.

A glance at the February precipitation map shows that the month was decidedly dry from the Ohio, central Mississippi, and lower Missouri Valleys northward, nearly all stations in this area reporting less than half the usual amount of precipitation for the month. The Southwest, also, had scanty rainfall, especially western Texas and southern New Mexico, but a considerable area in the central-west, centering in Colorado, had more than usual. Snowfall was heavy from the central and upper Mississippi Valley eastward, especially in the Northeast. As much as four inches of snow was reported from as far South as Atlanta, Ga.

Now let us consider briefly the winter as a whole, comprising the three months from December to February, inclusive. December was warmer than normal in all sections of the Country, except in the more northern States from North Dakota eastward. January had more than normal warmth everywhere, except in a very few northeastern localities, while February was very cold in the East but

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warm in the West. When we combine the three months, which period is considered the winter season, we find a limited area, extending from central Virginia, central West Virginia, the upper Ohio Valley, and the central Lake region north-eastward had below normal temperatures; it was especially cold in New York and New England. In the South the winter was mostly from 2° to 5° warmer than normal, and in the western two thirds of the country the average temperature for the three months was from 3° to as much as 10° above normal. Precipitation during the winter was decidedly below normal in nearly all sections east of the Mississippi River; also in the middle and northern trans-Mississippi States, the Southwest and in much of the Northwest. In eastern Texas, the central Great Plains, and central Rocky Mountain States there was more than the normal amount of precipitation. Thus for the country as a whole the winter of 1933-34 was decidedly warmer than normal and had less than the usual precipitation; it was both warmer and dryer than last winter. The average winter temperature was above normal over about 90 percent of the country.

With regard to agriculture, in general, it was rather less favorable than usual. Seasonal outside operations were facilitated over the western two thirds of the country, and in most of the South, while the mildness in the great western grazing districts favored livestock which were permitted to graze freely during most of the time. In the East and Northeast outside work was hampered, being largely at a standstill during February, and at the same time, because of deficient precipitation, the soil became rather alarmingly dry over large areas, especially in the Southeast, the interior valleys, and the Northwest. Recently the moisture situation in the Southeast and the interior has improved materially, at least for the time being, through much needed rains in the former and moderate to heavy snows in the latter. However, the subsoil is very dry in many States and a great deal more rain is needed. The February low temperatures killed most of the early fruit buds, especially peaches, in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia and northern and western Virginia, while there is considerable apprehension as to possible heavy damage in Michigan. Much damage was done to winter truck crops from southeastern Virginia southward. There has been no apparent harm to peaches in the important producing sections of the Southeast, and light to only moderate truck damage is reported from other Gulf sections, with many localities escaping entirely. Farm work is now largely at a standstill in the southern States because of recent heavy rain, but light rains and water from melting snow have materially improved conditions over the Winter Wheat Belt, especially in the heavy-producing western sections. In the spring wheat area the soil is unfavorably dry to great depths and heavy spring rains will be necessary to insure a good crop of grain this year.